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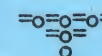
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ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Brian Bridge joined Common Wealth from Oxford during the pre-election campaign there in 1959. He is the author of "Information Machines and the Good Society" and is now a lecturer and consultant in Data Processing Systems. "Technology and Social Conflict" was the third paper read at the week-end School in September, 1979.

Doreen Evered is a Somerset teacher and member of Common Wealth. "First School" was written before the current cuts in public expenditure started, but it will remain topical for a long time to come.

Laurens Otter has been a contributor to The Libertarian for very many years, and has an unrivalled knowledge of fringe political organisations gained from personal observation, and sometimes participation as well as from wide reading.

John Danks has been a member of Common Wealth since 1943. After a spell of research for the motor industry he taught administration and political science at Kingston Polytechnic and the University of the South Pacific until his retirement two years ago.

L. J. Pittman has been a subscriber to the Libertarian for some years. He is currently engaged in research in the Social Sciences requiring a broad-based inter-disciplinary background and knowledge of recent social and political history.

FORTHCOMING FEATURES

Issue No. 18 will include the final article in the "Perspectives of Self Government" series, dealing with workers' control and co-ownership; the second article in the series on "Fringe Political Organisations, dealing with the Council Communists and the Alternative Society; a feature on Survival International; book reviews and other items.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SCHOOL

The annual Common Wealth Week-end School will be on the subject of Trade Unionism this year. The School will be held in Bristol over the week-end 26th/28th September; details of speakers, cost, location will be circulated to members at the end of June, and will also be available by request to W.J. Taylor, 107 Pilton Street, Barnstaple N. Devon EX31 1PG

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES: As from Issue 18, subscriptions within U.K. will be 45p post free; Overseas 45p plus postage; Orders for 4 or more copies of each issue will be subject to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %.

## NOTE ON CORRESPONDENCE

The hope was expressed in our last issue that readers would write to the Editor with their views on articles published in Nos. 15 and 16. So far two letters have been received, but as these included other matter, extracts only are reproduced here.

Referring to Douglas Kepper's "The Anti-Nazi March and After", Avis Saltzman protests at the footnote which said that the Socialist Workers Party was "as bad as the National Front", which she describes as "total rubbish". S.W.P. members, she writes, "are overwhelmingly young and idealistic people who persist in believing in socialism in spite of the mess that has been made of it by the imperialism and State capitalism of Russia. Their ideas and actions are dangerous to the entrenched privileged who run this country no matter which government is in. That is why their importance and influence is over-emphasised by the press owned and influenced by these privileged, a lie so thoroughly swallowed by Kepper and most of the people of Britain. That is why kindly and well-meaning organisations like Common Wealth which appear to us members to be eminently sensible . . . . . have hardly ever even got off the ground. The same thing will happen to the S.W.P. I assure you they are tiny, idealist and honourable - like Common Wealth. But they are not what is going on in this country."

Another reader reacted to "Some Thoughts on Libertarians and Economic Systems" by claiming that Tom Leagill should be less mealy-mouthed. The "freedom of the market" of which he talks is the freedom of one man to rob another, so why doesn't he say so? Also, since such freedom can only be protected by the panoply of forces of law and order to keep workers in their place, his talk of political freedom is at once nonsensical and dishonest. Yugoslavia - like other Stalinist-derived economies - is not an alternative to a market economy, since money still exists. His case is therefore based on a false premise."

It would be helpful if in future correspondents were to use the conventional "letter to the Editor" format, confining their remarks to the particular articles they wish to comment on and giving their names and addresses, although these will be withheld on request.

At the same time, letters will be welcome dealing with editorial policy, format of the "Libertarian", or suggestions for its promotion, which may not be intended for publication.

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"The essential thing to be done at the moment is to identify the nature of society, learn to understand it and prepare to overcome it. To attempt to overcome an enemy one does not understand is utter folly."

From "We hold these truths", Common Wealth's Manifesto, 50p postfree.

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## TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

by Brian Bridge

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In this article "technology" is taken to mean "scientific or "pseudo-scientific theory put to practical ends" and "products of technology" to include all intentional outputs of technology, including services as well as tangible products.

My own view of technology is necessarily coloured by the particular branch of technology which I work in, namely computing. Acknowledging this, I shall conclude with a section specifically on implications of computing developments. But first let us discuss some more general thoughts on technology in relation to social conflict and power relationships.

### 1. How technology creates social conflict

Suppose that an individual within a group (or a group within a larger group) newly acquires control of a product of technology - whether this product be a car, a T.V. transmitter, a nuclear bomb or a computer. Then for this individual it will generally be the case that the range of life-chances will be increased, or at any rate not reduced. That is to say, the person or group controlling the technology will continue to have available the range of choices which existed before, together with possible additional choices arising out of the new technology, assuming that (a) the product is not addictive and (b) the price paid for the product was not so high as seriously to reduce the previously existing range of choice.

It may be objected that a new technology often drives out the old and therefore may actually reduce the range of life-chances by eliminating those associated with the old technology. This is often true, but it does not affect the case which is being argued. If I am the only person having control of the products of a particular technology, then I can choose to do without them. If, on the other hand, there are also other people able to gain control of such products then my choice may be reduced - but this is caused by their possession and control, not by mine. If I am the only person in the neighbourhood having the use of a car, I can choose whether to use it or continue to use public transport. But if enough of my neighbours also acquire cars, the public transport option may be lost. The same is true of new manufacturing technology: no-one is forced to adopt it unless the competitors are able to get it too.

If the results for the person or group acquiring control of a product of technology are positive or at any rate non-negative, the same cannot always be said for the remainder of the society within which that person or group operates. The effects on these others may be good, bad or indifferent, depending on (a) the disposition of the person or group controlling the technological product (does the neighbour with the car give lifts ?)

- (b) effects of one or many people changing to the new product on the availability of the products which they no longer require and on the livelihood of those who produce them
- (c) "accidents" - undesigned by-products of the new product (such as exhaust fumes)
- (d) inducements to the controllers of the product, such as rewards or grants for mitigating bad by-products, and payments for making the product available for 'social' uses
- (e) regulation or repression of those controlling technological products.

Often the ill effects (especially under (b) and (c)) are potentially so great that regulation or even outright suppression of control of many products of technology may appear to be the only way of enabling life to remain tolerable for those affected.

But what are the implications of this? To put conditions upon the users of technological products may require high technical knowledge in the enforcement and often even in the drafting of the regulations. Ordinary non-expert people may be effectively excluded from decision-making in these areas, even if (a large 'if'!) the original intention is to protect their interests against uses of high technology.

Where a technological product is considered so dangerous that it is considered that no-one should be allowed to use it, then do-it-yourself or even know-it-yourself may be suppressed.

Technological developments often therefore lead to proliferation of rules and regulations, "expert" enforcers and legislators, monopolies and control of knowledge.

## 2. Technology and power relationships : effects of productivity changes

"Productivity" in its usually accepted sense may be defined as the ratio of the number of people required in production to the volume of a given type of output. Although there are exceptions, increases in productivity are generally accompanied by increased job specialisation.

Let us enormously simplify the development of the past and the next two hundred years and consider three stages of increasing productivity and a few of their implications.

### (a) Low productivity, low specialisation

This first stage has largely been left behind by our society, though the development has not proceeded evenly in all areas of work. Large numbers of people are required for the production of goods and services, but because of the low level of specialisation many of these people are interchangeable.

Managers in production are thus highly dependent upon the consent (willing or otherwise)

of large numbers of workers but are often able by playing workers off against one another to ensure that their workforce is sufficient.

#### (b) High productivity, high specialisation

At this stage far fewer people are required in production. Those who are required are largely specialised. Each specialist group is needed by management and cannot be interchanged with others. Each specialist group is able to bring production to a stop and thus achieves a measure of control over production, but only in a negative sense. They cannot positively make production happen on their terms because other specialist groups too have negative control. A large part of management time and effort goes into diplomacy: finding such common ground between different group interests as also coincides with the managerial interest.

At the same time there is a large part of unemployed or underemployed people who potentially have the time, surplus energy and motivation to cause problems for authority. Although some observers of our present condition suggest that education or social service could fill the gap, the greatest efforts to persuade people to fill their "spare time" are coming from the so-called leisure industries, which nevertheless do not seem to be keeping up.

#### (c) Total automation

We are still a long way off this stage, which indeed may never be reached totally. If total automation were to be developed in a context arising out of our present form of society, then perhaps the only people still required in relation to production (apart from consumers) would be managers to set objectives and salesmen to maintain demand.

It may be of interest to note that if even product design and planning were left entirely to machines, there would be no radical technical innovations from that time onward - unless artificial intelligence develops in ways greatly exceeding the present known potential.

### 3. Access to Technology

Individuals and groups may become heavily committed to the use of particular products and services of technology, either because they have dispensed with alternatives (often for reasons of economy or simplification) or because they have taken on commitments which entail use of the product or service. For example, how many commercial contracts today imply the supplier's access to a supply of electricity or to some means of road transport? How many families' living arrangements assume access to a piped water supply, sewage disposal, spare parts for domestic machinery, to name a few?

In the short and medium term these individuals and groups are vulnerable to the disruption of supply, especially of services and consumable products. Such disruption may be caused



by the negative power of particular groups in production (mentioned earlier), or by authority using its power over such supplies as a method of control (for example, the cutting off of power supplies to a building occupied by a sit-in or work-in).

Counter measures by those affected by the disruption include use of alternative supply sources, ability to "do-it-yourself", or re-structuring other aspects of life so as to do without. These often take a long time to make ready and are thus best prepared in anticipation of the problem. One of the motivations of the alternative technology movement was to avoid the controls exercised by authority through the supply of centralised services.

In the longer term, the State and other groups (especially the so-called professions) may limit or deny right of access to technological products and services by means of monopolies, licensing, control of distribution and pricing. Do-it-yourself counter-measures may be ruled out by control of access to knowledge, either specifically (by Official Secrets Acts) or generally (by political control of entry to education and training).

#### 4. Computer developments

Finally, a few words on developments since my booklet "Information Machines and the Good Society" published by Common Wealth in 1971 and still available (15p + postage). Since then there have been great changes in the economics of computers. Computers can now be mass-produced at very low cost compared with a few years ago. They can now no more be abolished than can ball-pens. They are, or very soon will be, in washing machines, sewing machines, motor cars and children's toys.

The silicon chip is much reported. Ever since 1960 the technology has developed at such a rate that the number of electronic components which could be included in each mass-produced chip has doubled annually. Technologists say that they already know of the techniques which will enable this annual doubling (with consequent reduction in the cost and power consumption and increase in computing power) to continue until 1984 at least. The mass-production of silicon chips does not promise the creation of large numbers of jobs. The multi-component chip reduces enormously the number of inter-connections and therefore the amount of wiring required. The pure atmosphere needed for chip production intensifies the efforts of designers to take human beings out of the production process. Even the logic designs of computers can now be done by computers.

The new low-price computing components can be used in many ways.

(a) They will largely replace or simplify specially-designed control and switching systems (such as the programme controllers in washing machines or the mass of switches and connections in car electrical systems).

(b) They will be used to monitor and control resource-using processes in the interests of greater economy (for example, to enable cars to use fuel more efficiently).

(c) They will enable more powerful large computers to be developed for information pro-

cessing (including the processing of large data bases which may include personal information). However, this development may be slower than the others in showing its full effects, because of the present relative shortage of computer systems analysts and programmers and the large amount of analysis and programming effort required to develop systems of this kind.

(d) They will be used to develop further the already flourishing market in hobby computers.

(e) They will be used together with developments in automatic data transmission to provide information network terminals cheap enough to go into every home (inside the television set).

What will be the effects of these applications of computing technology? Effects of productivity changes have been discussed in an earlier section. Information processing developments could lead to the possibility of greater spans of control for management. At the same time the ability of small specialist groups of workers (computer programmers and operators) to disrupt will increase and counter-measures will be taken by management (such as the greater automation of computer operations and the de-skilling of computer input operations).

The increase of hobby computing may perhaps reduce the mystique of computing among the general public (though the precedent of hi-fi does not lead to great hopes in this direction). The availability of information services through the television set will affect the role of newspapers, which will perhaps respond to the competition by stressing still further their provision of entertainment rather than information. In the long run this could make political journalism (including minority political journalism) difficult.

Can these effects be controlled? To some extent, I think, with the exception of the productivity effect. This can only be modified or deferred if international agreement is secured or if individual areas become self-sufficient enough to be able to control their own economic development. Even then because of other technological developments the apparatus of control necessary to keep enough work available for people to do would be frighteningly powerful, whatever the economic system within which it operated.

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"INFORMATION MACHINES AND THE GOOD SOCIETY", written for C.W., by Brian Bridge, is as he mentions, still available 25p per copy, post-free, from W.J. Taylor, 107 Pilton Street, Barnstaple, N. Devon.

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What's done we partly may compute,  
But know not what's resisted.

Robert Burns.



## FIRST SCHOOLS

BY DOREEN EVERED.

Primary Schools, by definition, come first, but incredibly, judging by facts and what is said and written, this is overlooked. With unabashed favouritism the concern and the cash are lavished on Secondary Schools with their problems of discipline, delinquency and the illiterate school leaver. The remedies to the problems of to-day's education must be sought at a deeper, less spectacular, level. In times of economic difficulties it is especially essential that priorities be right, but instead the direction of the increasing cuts in expenditure indicates present topsy-turvy thinking. Everyone knows a good housekeeper will keep her priorities right - necessities come first. In education the priority - the necessity - is Infant Schools. It is not so very long ago when, for the majority, there was none other than the Primary School. Education ceased at the age of twelve, and the traditionalists never miss an opportunity to tell us from their rose-tinted memory that the standard of the three 'r's was higher.

It is said the wellbeing of a country can be judged by the importance accorded education, but commonsense alone dictates that education should come higher than at present on our country's housekeeping list. It is extravagant to waste teachers in unemployment. A teacher's work is far from unproductive - it is the cultivation of the coming generation. What could be more responsible and enduring work? All material possessions may be lost but that which is in the mind cannot be taken away. Trained minds and informed inspiration are our country's greatest assets.

However, we will not go far if we build our education on sand, the foundations must be sure. Perhaps the only priority before education is homes. There should be a home (not a little box) for every family with room for a tradition of possessions - roots as the topical word has it, and room for creative hobbies for all the family. Our society has done well in health education for the body but little is done in general instruction for the education of the child's mind from birth through childhood.

Prospective parents need to be instructed also in the early mental development of their child. When a child starts school the infant teacher joins forces with the parents to advance the child's education, but the parents' cooperation continues to be essential for good progress.

An infant teacher's work is formidable and vital. This is where the ratio of child to teacher should be very low. The ratio of children to adults at play school is officially not more than eight to one. Yet exactly at the time when serious teaching starts at school the teacher is expected to cope with a vastly larger number.

To ensure children are learning to read, the teacher must take them word by word - individually. The teacher must write each child's name hundreds of times to demonstrate and

identify. Individually the children must have their hands held to show the direction in the formation of letters. To ensure this is being continued correctly the children must be watched individually. Infant children cannot read instructions and they have a very limited vocabulary. Everything must be explained, even the words to be used in explanation, and the teacher must be sure of each child's understanding. Number concepts have to be tested individually. Written answers cannot be expected for many months and more. For the most part a child's span of concentration is short and yet every child has to be kept constantly involved.

All this deep and concentrated teaching is interspersed with much physical care - shoe-lace tying, button fastening, nose blowing and the like. There are long hours of preparation, organisation, recording and collecting. The children cannot tidy up properly, or prepare the classroom and apparatus; they cannot position themselves in, say, a circle; they are unable to cut paper or mix paints; they cannot be sent on messages, shut windows, etc. At the end of the year some of the children will be more capable taking into account their size and strength, but there will still be those who are unable efficiently even to rinse out the milk bottles.

Inevitably, large numbers in infant classes mean that some children will not have enough attention and will slip through the net, and continuing large classes in Junior School set the course for problems - missing out all along the line. A few hours a week remedial teaching is not the solution. It is too late, the child is missing yet more of the other lessons and already feels a failure.

The answer is to halve the size of infant classes, or at least the reception class, and, if possible, the second year class, say fifteen children, and still sharing the assistance of an Infant Helper. The most important element in teaching is the ratio of children to teacher. Tinkering about - a few off here and a few off there - is no good. It must be a really small number on which the teacher may concentrate. Here the children who find it difficult to read and write, are with the teacher who is qualified to teach them, and with their peers. In the third year of infants or in the junior school, let these small parallel classes come together when all the children are able to read and write with confidence.

From this one fundamental policy there would be saving in the cost of expensive remedial teachers in junior and secondary schools. There would be fewer delinquents, fewer Dorstal and remand homes, fewer misfits in society, with consequent immense saving and improvement in the tone of general morale.

There are many sixth form lessons with very small ratios, sometimes only a one to one ratio. This and the small numbers in some village schools cause statistics to give a decidedly false picture. The small numbers should be at the other end - in the infant classes, with mobile classrooms if necessary. It would be possible for sixth forms to work alone on correspondence courses - they can read and write.

There is a great deal, however, to be said for children leaving school much earlier, going

out to low paid work for a few years and, with ready acceptance on all sides, returning to higher education when more mature. In this way only the people who really intended to study would return.

But at the other end of school - nothing can replace those early years of learning and the utmost should be made of them and this can only be done by smaller classes and experienced teachers.

Somehow or other even in the profession, among those with less insight, infant teachers are rated lower than secondary or 'adult' teachers - teachers who are called specialists. What could be more specialist than teaching infants? An infant teacher does not teach what she knows but by and through what she knows. It is real teaching with a special vocation. The most highly valued people should be in infant teaching, for that is where the foundations are laid, not only of reading, writing and mathematics, but of such qualities as observation, appreciation, concentration and initiative.

As soon as infant teachers are given their proper status and rated with other specialists, experienced infant teachers will not be tempted to look for promotion elsewhere. So often new teachers are given the reception class and left to find their feet. The attitude being what it is, they are anxious to leave this difficult, and, because of the numbers, frustrating work, to move on to classes of older children where they find more acclaim. There should be promotion for infant teachers within their own sphere. For instance, a successful reception class teacher should be rewarded as a specialist after, say, five years experience and automatically given a graded post with increasing grades over the years. It is the status that is important for them, hopefully, the work and the children would be given proper priority.

To be saying this in the present economic climate may seem out of place but it is at just such a time that priorities have greatest force. Money should be spent economically - and wisely in the right place at the right time. This is urgent. It cannot be over-emphasised that smaller infant classes with a continuity of experienced specialist infant teachers is the priority in education.

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## FRINGE POLITICS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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### Editorial introduction:

During the immediate post-war period, when Common Wealth still saw itself as a potential electoral force, it became increasingly clear that 'fringe' political organisations were being ground into fragments in the vice-like grip of the Two-Party system. During the Attlee era first Common Wealth itself, then the I.L.P., then the C.P.G.B. lost their last Parliamentary seats; by 1951 the Liberals were reduced to six, with hundreds of lost deposits; the S.N.P. and Plaid Cymru were at their nadir; even the nationalist remnant in Northern Ireland was unseated by Unionists in the mid-fifties.



Nevertheless various movements survived in the political "wilderness" while towards the end of the fifties new forces emerged, for some of which the non-party Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was to provide the catalyst. Then came the Liberal 'revival', followed by the electoral breakthrough of the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists and the end of the long-standing alliance between the Ulster Unionists and the Conservative and Unionist Party. Then the Ulster Unionists themselves broke up into contending factions, while their opponents regrouped under the banner of the SDLP.

So it was that in the 1979 General Election the nine political parties already represented in the previous House of Commons all retained seats in the new one as against five between 1951 and 1966, while as many as 612 'fringe' candidates fought under another ninety-eight different labels. Nearly half the 612 stood for the National Front, and perhaps half the remainder should be considered as 'one-man bands' but this still left some fifty organised 'fringe' groups fielding an average of two candidates each.

By no means all minority political movements enter electoral activity, some because they aim at cross-party support for some limited objective, some for lack of resources, and others as a matter of principle, as in the case of most anarchists. The revival of electoral activity does nevertheless show that however lunatic the 'fringe' may seem to the average citizen, it is clearly far from moribund. That is why we invited Laurens Otter to unravel for us the intricacies of ideology, the splits, alignments, re-alignments and front activities of the groups over the past half-century or so. We believe that readers will find this series to be fascinating, instructive and controversial.

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THE FAR LEFT

by LAURENS OTTER  
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Naturally in dealing with the Left I have to use a certain restraint; there are an abundance of right-wing organisations trying to catalogue the Left, and if for no better reason than that we do not wish to make their job easy, it behoves libertarians to avoid publishing anything on other leftist groups other than what they say openly about themselves. There will, however, always be occasions when even observing this rule one is still denounced by the paranoid for revealing things.

ANARCHISM

Anarchism is not one political philosophy, but a number of overlapping ones, not always reconcilable. It is not the aim of this article to attempt to describe the differing varieties; but it is worth saying that the most successful - numerically - varieties of anarchism - Council Communism, Syndicalism, and even the anarchism of Bakunin - have originated as dissident variants of Marxism; that anarchist thinkers such as Kropotkin and Malatesta, who were never personally libertarian dissidents from Marxism, nevertheless might be said to be

influenced by Marx, fusing into a philosophy so derived currents drawn from elsewhere.

These traditions have been constantly refreshed by later thinkers unable to reconcile their political resistance to bureaucracy, or their theories on matters such as psychology, or education, with Marxist orthodoxies. Nevertheless the mainstream of modern anarchism, however much both anarchists and Marxists may dislike the fact, is a collection of dissident interpretations of Marx, into which have been woven other traditions. Notably: an ultra-Utilitarian Individualism as evinced chiefly by Stirner; a moralist individualism (though this frequently produces communitarianism in practice) as elaborated by Tolstoi or Thoreau; an ultra-Jacobinism which inspired Godwin, Proudhon, some left Mazzinians. Furthermore since Godwin is not merely seen by anarchists as the founder in modern times of the anarchist philosophy, but is also seen by many Christian Socialists as similarly responsible for re-founding their philosophy, it is natural that apart from the Tolstoi-Thoreau tradition of Christian anarcho-pacifism, there is also a broadly syndicalist tradition of Christian anarchism.

Except for some varieties of Stirnerism these are all varieties of how society may be changed, and the Stirnerite exceptions still involve an absolute rejection of existing society even though they have renounced any hope of changing it, and merely think in terms of ways of opting out from both society and the movements to oppose it - which they hold to be equally authoritarian. There are, however, "Permanent Protesters" who, arguing that society is inevitably getting worse, see anarchism in terms of a last-ditch defence. Libertarian activity is designed to limit the degeneration of society, draw attention to the ills of authoritarianism, create final bastions of freedom. As a modification of "Permanent Protest" one finds "meliorism" or "Revisionist Anarchism", that while starting from the "Permanent Protest" basic belief that the state and society are coterminous and that therefore the anarchist belief in a free and stateless society is nonsensical, nevertheless believe that anarchist direct action and mutualist cooperation can achieve minor improvements, provided that the movement is not handicapped by association with Utopian beliefs; therefore logical Revisionists insist that anarchists should abandon all theories that connect them with a belief in revolution.

Traditionally anarchists in Britain have divided only on matters of present-day organisation not in terms of how the revolution is seen as happening at some date in the future; though divisions on immediate matters often reflect longer-term differences and have usually led to differing factions stressing different theories. It is not, however, possible to equate exactly the historic traditions of anarchism with the various anarchist papers.

#### The journals and their readers

"Freedom", for instance, originally founded by Kropotkin, wrested from Kropotkin by one of his disciples when the founder supported the 1914 war, split at the end of the war, one facti on joining a Tolstoian community though retaining a broadly Kropotkinist theory, the other moving further towards syndicalism, then merging in a broadly council communist basis with other groups to form "Solidarity" (not the present group of the same name) before



the war. "Freedom" was reformed on a Malatestan basis after the War (with a strong element - which may or may not have been visible in Malatesta's thought - of Mazzinian romantic conspiratorial theory) and now once again reflects a mixture of Tolstoian and Kropotkinist thought.

"Anarchy" was founded as a Revisionist Anarchist paper, oriented towards the New Left and its first series did excellent work in managing to persuade the latter to incorporate into its philosophy elements of anarchist thought; it also had an influence on a wing of the Liberals so that from 1964 to 1966 it was fairly common to see articles in Liberal News lifted with only very minor adjustments and, of course, a changed author's name, from the previous edition of Anarchy. However, the more it influenced the New Left, the more the issue of the State was posed, the New Left being quite unprepared for a frontal assault on the establishment, and the revisionist part of revisionist anarchism became less and less relevant, so that Colin Ward - the founder - had abandoned this particular theory by the time he came to resign the editorship. His successor took over what had been a theoretical paper, denied that it had ever held the one theory that originally motivated it, and was himself uncommitted to any alternative theory, so that the second series lacked the coherence of the first.

The old Syndicalist Workers' Federation and the present Direct Action Movement represent certainly an ideological current; nevertheless the SWF - initially the Anarchist Federation of Britain - was separated from Freedom as the result of a purely organisational split. The result was that the SWF was never quite certain whether it was an anarchist propaganda group committed to the creation of a mass industrial unionist organisation as a means to attaining anarchist revolution, or whether it was itself the embryonic industrial unionist movement, and as such open to people who were not themselves anarchists. Thus, when Ken Hawkes, in 1969, found himself unable to carry on as general secretary, and various other committee members were also otherwise engaged, and consequently a self-elected Provisional Committee reorganized the SWF, the new secretary was someone who had insisted at all SWF conferences for nearly a decade that the SWF was not anarchist, that he would not be a member if it were, and had told us that Mao Tse Tung was the revolutionary hope of S.E. Asia. The Direct Action Movement appears to be an attempt to rectify this.

#### Common Wealth

Common Wealth, though it originated as a mixture of left Liberalism and Social Democracy, has been anarchist in effect for thirty years, and in name for about half of that (i.e. The Libertarian). However, because of its distinct history it has never functioned within a wider anarchist context. This is a pity, since its theories - by and large - represent an intermediate position between the Revisionist Anarchist renunciation of the aim of revolution; and the tradition common to most non-syndicalist varieties of anarchism that it is necessary to pose spontaneous revolution as an immediate possibility (whether or not it is seen as likely) as all alternatives are elitist.

Syndicalism, of course, poses a pattern of building the future society within and opposed



to the present that avoids this. C.W. had worked out, while it was still a parliamentary party, a pattern of activity resembling the Permanent Protest "widening the sphere of freedom", but linked to an economic analysis - reminiscent of William Morris' statement that social revolution could only come after a period of Fabian bureaucracy that, in Trotsky's words, "took revolution off the order of the day". The job was to create pockets of libertarianism which might survive the decades of bureaucratic collectivist rule and then be the power-houses of a future anarchist revolution. Though no doubt had this been argued seriously within a wider anarchist context at the end of the '60s it would have been rejected by impatient youth, it would, I fancy, have found an answering spark amongst many Anarchy readers, both inside and outside the movement.

### Vanguardism

Solidarity, though it doesn't like the label, and will not acknowledge progenitors outside Socialisme ou Barbarie - has come to represent the main current of Council Communist spontaneous anarcho-marxism. It is therefore one of the twin poles, with syndicalism, of the libertarian marxist mainstream of anarchism; but unfortunately it does not so regard itself.

Libertarian Communist Group, formerly Anarchist Workers' Association, formerly Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists, was initially founded to be a ginger group within a wider anarchist movement, hoping to precipitate and structure internal debate so as to make anarchists capable of involving people outside (they were under the impression there was no coherent anarchist theory of social revolution, a common Marxist misconception). Our fault is in fact there are too many such theories and too few people holding any one of them; that we always are faced with twin dangers: either we all stay together in a meaningless mix, and out of it, since a liberal respect for the other person's opinion rules, no clear picture of the way forward is shown; or we split into sectarian fragments too small to be able to say anything loudly anyway. ORA was intended as an avoidance of both the Scylla of fragmentation and the Charybdis of liberalism. However, the organisation evolved into a vanguardist movement; no doubt it is the most effective body in spreading anarchist ideas now existing in Britain, but to those of us who consider that since 1917 opposition to vanguardism has been the central tenet of anarchism, there is a fundamental self-contradiction.

There is another anarcho-vanguardist group: Black Flag. Insofar as it has a theoretical position, this is that all pacifists are fascist. However, it doesn't apparently believe all fascists are fascist - or if they are, not all fascists (except putative pacifist ones) are to be attacked - since when one renegade anarchist who had joined the National Front and from there sent racist abuse to his former comrades in the SWF, died, Black Flag printed an approving obituary. Saying without giving a scrap of evidence, and against the renegade's expressed statements and boasts that he had worked electorally for the Tories, that he had only joined to subvert the fascists, and that he never did anything to compromise himself.

There is also a body called the Anarchist Communist Alliance, I doubt if anyone, least of all the members of the ACA, could describe what the views of this body are, so I shall not try. Finally, apart from local journals, various small "Anarcho-feminist" papers and some other anarchist journals spring up and die down; many of the best have Wynford Hicks as the moving spirit, but his efforts to create a journal not tied to any one current of anarchism and yet more committed and more theoretically based than Freedom, have so far always led to the creation of papers not unlike Freedom; and there isn't really room for another paper of that model.

#### Quasi-anarchist organisations

There has always been an area of overlap where organisations contain those who call themselves anarchists and those who do not, and it is difficult to sort out which is the dominant element and whether it is an anarchist organisation attracting non-anarchists as allies (in the same way as anarcho-syndicalism does) or if it is a non-anarchist organisation in which anarchists are willing to work perhaps at the risk of compromising their anarchism. This sort of area has become more complex of late.

Twenty-two years ago when the Direct Action Committee against nuclear weapons was first founded, most of its founders, curiously with the exception of a Common Wealth member - Allen Skinner - would have called themselves philosophically anarcho-pacifist, having come across anarchist theories in the Non-Violent Resistance Group; but they held that arguing a full anarchist, or indeed, even a full pacifist, case, might alienate support which could be won on the single issue of non-violent direct action for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

As a result they often found themselves in an anomalous position, since their ideas of non-violent direct action were shaped by many years in the pacifist movement, and they used the term in a way that to outsiders seemed very sectarian, since non-violence to a pacifist does not mean merely refraining from hitting back when hit; while to the average non-pacifist it probably only means not hitting first. A minority of DAC activists grouped round the Pacifist Youth Action Group argued that unilateral nuclear disarmament could not be attained - certainly not maintained - without anarchist social revolution, so that playing down the full anarchist case for the sake of winning wider support was a self-defeating tactic. PYAG was certainly anarchist; and by all objective counts the DAC was the most effective anti-statist organisation then in existence despite the fact that nearly half the members of the DA Committee would have rejected anarchist theory, despite the compromise of the rest, and despite scarcely libertarian internal organisation.

PYAG consistently pushed the view that unilateralism could only be attained



when the movement became anarchist and used direct action all across the board for social change. It was until the formation of the Committee of 100 a somewhat lone struggle. Five years later anarchism for a short time became fashionable in CND, and since then it has become almost a matter of course for active pacifists to profess anarchism. Not merely is Peace News now openly an anarchist paper\* but the PPU from which Peace News split because of the PPU's opposition to direct action - is happy to be so described; and has published Ronald Sampson's "The Anarchist basis of Pacifism."

This said, one has to point out that many who have on this basis embraced the label anarchism, would admit to being anarchist *faute de mieux*. They can see the political parties will not bring pacifism, so they become anarchists to withdraw from that arena, but they do not really think in terms of anarchist revolutionary change.

Something of the same sort has happened on the Christian Left; only ten years ago the Christian Anarchist Group - although associated with the remains of the Christian Committee of 100 and another similar group - was a defiant eccentricity even within the Christian Left. Apart from a number of Labour bureaucrats calling themselves the Christian Socialist Movement, and excepting a few Stalinists and former Trotskyists trying to come up with an acceptable form of left reformism, nowadays the wider Christian Left tends to translate its politics into secular terms as anarchist; but it is an anarchism more akin to the Revisionist Anarchism of the early '60s than to the syndicalist or anarcho-pacifist traditions that ten years ago characterised Christian Anarchists. Nevertheless within both traditions the more frankly revolutionary traditions survive, no longer isolated as they were.

I believe there is no longer a Stirnerite group, though I have no doubt that Individualist Anarchists are still active in their way.

### THE "IMPOSSIBILIST" TRADITION

The word "impossibilism" in the English-speaking world has a different connotation from its usage on the Continent; there those parties that were not totally reformist were called Maximalist or Impossibilist, and it was from these that the Communist Parties evolved; here in Britain, as in the U.S.A., the Communist Parties were formed from the "Possibilist" wing of Marxism, and the "Impossibilists" from the first regarded the Communists as reformists and betrayers of Socialism.

The English-language "Impossibilist" tradition is markedly different from the Continental one in terms of theory. Fundamental to their concept was/is that socialism can only be built when the vast majority of the working class - indeed of the population generally - is not merely convinced on balance of the desirability of socialism, but also understands scientific socialist economics. Such Impossibilists view with horror the prospect of any premature seizure of power by socialists. Reformists who seek votes for piecemeal aims so that

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\*I recall regular subscribers writing to complain to Harry Mister - the business manager - after seeing PYAGers selling Peace News and Freedom at the same time.



they can get in power, allegedly to work for socialism, and bolsheviks, who attempt to gain the leadership of the masses on the basis of simplified slogans and transitional demands, are attacked for "putschism."

Anarchists are also accused of wanting premature revolution, despite their very rejection of the pursuit of power, and not just Bakunian anarchists are so accused, of whom the allegation is arguably correct. Indeed, the hard core of the Russian Workers' Opposition came to reject Lenin on the basis that he was not Marxist but Bakunian, and that this was the origin of his substitutionism.

#### Electoral activity versus Direct Action

English-speaking impossibilists have relied on elections to provide the measure of socialist consciousness, but electors are asked to vote for their candidates only if they are convinced of the whole of their case; effectively it makes them constitutionalist and for all their conscious commitment to socialism, for all their insistence that state ownership does not constitute socialism, and for all their hatred of State capitalism, they often lack a full understanding of the nature of the State and the power of the State propaganda machine. Being opposed to premature revolution, they support purely defensive working-class economic struggles, but their insistence that any carrying over of these into a political propagandist field is reformist, hampers such support. They tend to fight shy of meliorist campaigns for libertarian education, approaches to the mentally ill, and so forth; as of campaigns on civil rights, anti-racism, anti-militarism, anti-colonialism; issues which other socialists while acknowledging as being only piecemeal reforms, see as combatting the authoritarianism of society, and the general conditioning processes whereby the masses are kept acquiescent and subservient. Indeed the impossibilists would regard the general radical claim that the ruling class uses issues of race to divide and brainwash the workers as being itself elitist, suggesting that the radical has a clarity of vision denied to the workers generally.

I leave it to the psychologists among Libertarian readers to say what the effect on the individual impossibilist is of holding that he is a slave (wage-slave), but except for trying to convince others that they too are slaves, denying himself the right to do anything immediately - however futile - to protest that servitude. But, though on the basis of no psychological knowledge, it always seems to me that although there is a strong economic case for the impossibilist arguments, the insistence on quietism until the vast majority are converted, could, if posed by a mass party - only lead to self-loathing.

The first impossibilist organisation in Britain broke from the Social Democratic Federation (later called the British Socialist Party which in turn was the main constituent of the Communist Party) in 1902. It was predominantly a Scottish grouping,

influenced by the theories of the American Marxist Daniel de Leon, who, in order to put flesh on Marx's theory of the new society being born within the womb of the old, emerging from it ready formed, turned to what would be the nature of the socialist republic of the future. The natural organisation of the working class is obviously shop-floor organisation in industry, the council of all the workers in one place; and on this basis he built a framework of socialist industrial unionism which should be combined with an electoral party. The party when elected - thus showing that the mass of the workers were socialist, would adjourn the political institutions sine die, and then the socialist industrial union would take over in a social general strike. His case against anarcho-syndicalism was that its great emphasis on direct action promoted individualist and minority elitist struggles; people resorted to sabotage substituting individual struggles for mass actions and in some instances nineteenth century syndicalists were involved in assassination or terrorist attacks.

### Critique of Terror

There was a certain justice in the allegation; though usually when sabotage or assassination were used this was when the working class had just suffered a major defeat at the hands of police thugs, and the resort to individualist acts was designed - whether wisely or not depended on the particular case - to limit State brutality. Unfortunately it is not an area where one may publish theoretical debate; one the one hand one had the theoretically argued polemics of De Leon attacking such acts, as did many syndicalists, and on the other one had the more or less spontaneous acts of sabotage. There does seem to be a valid middle ground, where one can accept that in general terms such acts foster a great man theory of history and detract from class activity, but that in conditions of rear-guard actions, after the working class has suffered a major defeat, and where the vengeful brutality of the State is so apparent that there is little danger that uncommitted workers will be alienated by leftist counter-terror, they are justifiable.

### Socialist Party of Great Britain

When the De Leonists left the SDF to form the SLP, a group which had been allied to them - mainly in London - felt that they had not been fully consulted, and two years later these formed the SPGB. But it was not only because of lack of consultation that the SPGB broke away. In the early years Connolly was the moving spirit of the SLP, but De Leon later expelled him from the American SLP, and tried to get him expelled from the IWW for his catholicism, and the British SLP followed suit. Connolly's Irish Republican Socialist Party, which had temporarily affiliated to the SLP then became independent.

Years later, when Con Lehane was a member of the Irish Dail, he told me that he had been the founder of the SPGB, although this is not how his former colleagues see it. Con Lehane had been Connolly's lieutenant in the Irish industrial union struggles at the end



of the nineteenth century. He had gathered round a bunch of militants, keyed them up for a strike, and then opted out when things got hot, leaving them to carry the can and discrediting the industrial unionist movement for a long time in that part of Ireland. Connolly was not the man to forgive leaders deserting struggles and allowing their followers to take the burden of retribution.

The SPGB when still a faction of the SDF had held a broadly De Leonist position, but now decided that even this was reformist. To produce any blueprint of the socialist commonwealth was pre-empting the right of consciously-socialist workers to form society as they saw fit. This meant a repudiation of De Leon's socialist industrial unionism; and since at that time the British SLP - unlike the Americans - still posed some transitional demands, this was described as reformism.

"Spugub" rejection of De Leonism could be interpreted in two ways, and for all the party's emphasis on theoretical clarity, two totally and incompatible different concepts co-exist within the party of what will happen after the SPGB wins its victory at the polls. There are those whose rejection of socialist industrial unionism resembles the council communist and Malatestan critique of syndicalism; they say that insisting that socialism must be based on an industrial unionist structure, limits in advance the powers of decision that a consciously socialist and revolutionary working class would have to shape society as it pleased; they also claim that an industrial unionist movement is inevitably open to bureaucratic degeneration and to some extent partakes of the faults of both vanguard parties and bureaucratic business unionism. These think in terms of a spontaneous revolutionary upsurge, after the election, and refuse to blueprint what such upsurge will do, other than to say it will be every bit as revolutionary as the De Leonist "Take and Hold" strike.

By contrast, there are also those in the party, who for all their ostensible rejection of piecemeal reformism, and their insistence that there can be no transitional period, nevertheless envisage in some sense, an SPGB government legislating for socialism. Indeed this latter view is the strict interpretation of "... that this machinery" (government) "including these forces" (the armed forces) "may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation..." (point 6 of the SPGB Declaration of Principles). A position that was underlined in a special statement in August 1955:

"We make allowance for a theoretically possible attempt in some form of violent sabotage during the revolutionary re-organisation. The control of the armed forces during this period will be an effective deterrent to any such violent attempt...."

A view which presupposes that the armed forces are likely to be loyal to a socialist government. If one queries this point with SPGB spokesmen they usually concede that the officers wouldn't be, but believe that the mass of the rank-and-file would be, showing them-



selves oblivious of the degree of indoctrination to which the ranks of the forces are subjected.

Some years ago, Bob Carltrap, then outside the SPGB for a time, said of it in the pages of an anarchist journal I edited:

"The SPGB opposes every humane movement, spits in every hand reaching out for decency and amelioration, because it sees this as the only way. ("Serve the silly bastards right" said one member after the Sharpeville massacre. "They weren't fighting for Socialism."

I thought at the time - and told him - that his strictures on his old party seemed a little over-severe, but I am, I confess, reminded of them every time I read his panegyrics on that party since he returned to it.

Just as when the SLP left the SDF it took an Impossibilist remnant which emerged two years later as the SPGB; so when the latter left it too took a remnant which turned to syndicalism, producing first Guy Aldred and then the then British section of the IWW. That was reinforced by further secessions from the SDF, by dissidents from the SPGB, and a split in the "Advocates of Industrial Unionism", an SLP front, and by the adherence of anarchists. Such groups do not survive (though the British IWW is going through its sixth or seventh reincarnation) but have left a revolutionary tradition that provides an appeal for successive generations.

#### Birth of the Shop Steward Movement

The SLP (or, rather, the Advocates of Industrial Unionism) played a significant part in the creation of the Shop Steward Movement - which in many ways was the authentic expression of syndicalism in Britain as the IWW was of it in America. However, not all the SPGB members approved of this, and a dissident faction centering on Dundee left the party to form the British Section of the International SLP (a splinter of which later became the Scottish Section); this body which put out posters opposing the 1926 General Strike as being reformist later changed its name to the Revolutionary Socialist Party, became converted to Trotskyism as the RSL and later merged into the Revolutionary Communist Party at the end of the war.

Two modern groupings try to incorporate De Leonism into their policies. One is the Communist Organisation of the British Isles, a group of Maoist lineage (a breakaway from the earlier British and Irish Communist Organisation) which manages to reconcile in its theoretical patterns the theories of De Leon, Bordiga, Gramsci and Stalin, a mix that would appear to amount to schizophrenia; curiously they have produced some very interesting material.

There is also a Plaid Gwerin Cymru (Workers' Party of Wales) that combines industrial unionism with the sort of decentralised folk cultural nationalism and pacifism that used to be the staple of the Welsh Labour Party. It is interesting to note that the Welsh Labour Party was the only party in the world to have a Welsh language newspaper.

to characterise the left wing of Plaid Cymru; indeed the whole party case is strongly reminiscent of the views Gwynfor Evans used to express a quarter of a century ago, at least, when talking to Common Wealth.

#### Twilight of the ILP

The term Impossibleist has also been used - and it will be apparent that I do not use the term as a pejorative, but as a mark of the principled revolutionary, and it is in this sense that I think it has been validly used - for the circle of ILP members most closely associated with the late Wilfred Wigham. Douglas Kepper, who recently had an article in the Liberatorian was one of the circle. I shall be mentioning various remnant factions of the ILP and something of their history in the next article, and will confine myself now to saying that this circle, which was never a formal group so that its numerical membership is uncertain, but amounted to half a dozen at most, incorporated into a broadly De Leonist framework ideas drawn from anarcho-syndicalism, council communism (chiefly Korsch and Pannekoek) Tolstol and Thoreau. For years Wilfred, almost alone, did virtually all the work done by the ILP and kept the organisation alive.

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### PERSPECTIVES OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

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#### IN THE EX-COLONIAL WORLD

by John Banks

Thirty years ago the inevitability and efficacy of concentration of political power was taken for granted. Some idealists thought that the trend towards concentration could alone guarantee world peace, and promoted the idea of world federalism. "Realists" sought security for their countries through the patronage of a super-power. No country, they argued, could maintain its independence in a world dominated by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., unless it accepted the protection or tutelage of one or the other. Not to accept such dependence was to live in a dangerous "power vacuum", and to court the fate of little neutral Belgium in two world wars.

This concept of the "power vacuum" also dominated debates about the consequences of decolonisation. When the British left the Indian sub-continent, of the Nile valley, or the Dutch abandoned Indonesia, or the French Indo-China, who would step in - the Americans or the Russians? It was not conceivable that the newly liberated countries would be left to their own devices. In China America's ally Chiang Kai-Shek could only be replaced by a communist regime that must by definition be dominated by Russia, and therefore obliged to serve Russian purposes. Alternative policies for a Third Camp or Third Way, prom-



oted by Common Wealth were derided as both idealistic (in the sense of impractical) and dangerous (they would weaken the West or East - you are either on our side or you are against us).

The centralist idea took another form in the essentially Anglo-Saxon concern to promote "economically viable" political entities where the pressure for decolonisation became irresistible. So, just as the British centralists had promoted the break-up of Germany along federal lines to suit their own purposes, they now promoted the union of a number of previously separate colonies in new federations which they hoped would minimise demands for economic and financial aid.

Unlike the West German Federation, which succeeded, the new colonial federations were unmitigated failures, because although designed to give economic strength, none of them took sufficient note of compatibility in other respects. After four years the West Indies Federation foundered on arguments about money, on the results of poor communications between remote islands, and on racial incompatibilities. An attempt to salvage some of the original federation for the smaller islands of the relatively compact Lesser Antilles also foundered, and each island has ended up completely separate from the others. In some cases artificial unions inherited from colonial days have now been severed. One community of 6,500 people, Anguilla, forced a British Prime Minister to make a monkey of himself in using armed force in the attempt to preserve their political union with neighbouring islands.

The equally short-lived Federation of Rhodesia and Nyassaland failed for other reasons, mostly racial, while the Federation of Malaysia was kept together only after a bitter war with neighbouring Indonesia and even then the Borneo constituents of the Federation have never been fully or equally associated with the original mainland Federation of Malaya. Singapore was expelled from that Federation on the grounds of racial and political incompatibility and has since asserted its commercial superiority over the whole Malay area as an independent City State, and its political independence by publicly repudiating C.I.A. subventions and Communist overtures alike.

In the fifties and sixties some leaders even of the ex-colonies entertained the federalist illusions of their former British masters. Prominent among these was the pan-African, Kwame Nkrumah, who, when dreams of a federation of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa faded promoted as second-best the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Federation. This was stillborn, not least because two members were Francophone and one Anglophone, but primarily because none of the parties to the union could conceive the nature of the political compromises required for successful federal government, let alone the necessity to maintain an independent judiciary capable of arbitrating between the member states and the federal government in times of conflict.

Parallel with Pan-Africanism was Pan-Arabism as promoted by the followers of President Nasser of Egypt and the Baathist socialists of Syria and Iraq which led to the union of Egypt, Syria and North Yemen in the United Arab Republic. After a year or two the U.A.R.



broke up as acrimoniously as any marriage between incompatibles, as have more recent unions between Egypt and Libya, or Libya and Tunisia, none of which could even be considered to have been consummated. While all of these mergers were conceived as providing their members with added political and economic security in the harsh world of power politics and economic exploitation, none achieved their objectives, even under the goad of the Israeli presence in the Middle East.

Instead, as decolonisation proceeded in the 1960's smaller and smaller territories won independence and a seat at U.N.O. British governments long resisted the demands for independence of island territories, and invented "associate status" for them, which meant internal self-government but the retention by the United Kingdom of control over foreign policy and defence. France, where she did not incorporate islands in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean or Pacific as parts of the French Union, retained a firm direction of their affairs on a colonial basis as long as possible. Somaliland was the smallest and therefore the last African continental possession held by France, while in the Indian Ocean the Comoro Islands, and in the Pacific the Anglo-French condominium of the New Hebrides have at last been reluctantly freed.

Some of the newly independent countries admitted as full members of U.N.O. number their people <sup>not</sup> in millions, nor in hundreds of thousands or even in tens of thousands, but in thousands or even hundreds, such is the fragmentation of the old empires.

Among the smallest are Niue (4,000), Nauru (7,000), Taveau (8,000) in the Pacific Ocean, beside which Fiji (550,000) Guinea Bissau (600,000) Lesotho (1,200,000) or Singapore (2,200,000) are giants, although none were thought populous enough to sustain independent statehood only a few years ago. By 1974 a U.N. commission was proposing statehood even for the 64 inhabitants of Pitcairn Island, who already enjoyed complete internal self-government. Against this background the independence debates conducted in the Shetlands, the Isle of Man or Corsica appear quite reasonable.

Common Wealth threw itself into the Movement for Colonial Freedom and its successors with considerable energy after 1945, and a succession of future African leaders attended our conferences or visited our offices in Gower Street and Hampstead High Street over the years, including Kwame Nkrumah, Joe Appiah and Kwesi Lamprey of Ghana, "Zik" late President of Nigeria, and Joe Murumbi, who later became Vice-President of Kenya. The present writer on joining the University of the South Pacific organised training in public administration for some 250 islanders between 1971 to 1974. Some of these were already heads of government departments, others have since become so, but in three instances they became Heads of State or Heads of Government in their respective countries, the newly independent Solomon Islands (161,000) and the New Hebrides (89,000). The populations indicated are no greater than those of an average to small

English County District but unlike English local councils, the island governments are responsible for the whole range of governmental services in their extensive territories.

Tavalu (former Ellice Islands) was the 100th new member admitted to the U.N. since its foundation in 1945. One consequence of decolonisation on this scale has been to help to break the grip of the super-powers over the world at large, for although many of the new States have depended on one or other Great Power from their birth, a significant number have either changed sides or broken free from the tutelage of their former patrons, as we have seen in the cases of Iraq, Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, Guinea, and most recently, a number of Caribbean micro-States.

Members of Common Wealth, past and present, can reflect with some satisfaction on having played a part in promoting this world-wide movement against the concentration and polarisation of political power

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Erratum In "Federalism and Devolution in Europe", issue No. 16, in the paragraph "Introducing Occitania", farmers in the LARZAC plateau (not the highest plateau) were protesting against the sequestration of their land by the French Army. LARZAC is now a household word in France. Earlier this year at a fund-raising dinner attended by Giscard three of the notables present turned their full plates upside down on the table, and refused to eat as a demonstration of discontent, and on the same tour the Tricolour was torn down on public buildings and replaced by the flag of Occitania.

J.C.B.

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### OBITUARIES

CHRYSTAL CATES died at her home in Diss, Norfolk, on 1st February, following a stroke. An early recruit to Common Wealth, she was a member of the Kensington Branch, and in 1949 stood for election to the L.C.C. For many years she was a member of the National Committee, and took a leading part in such diverse activities as money-raising and Sensory.

For two decades she was active in the affairs of Racial Unity, and Dorothy Connor tells us that she chaired a meeting of that Society only three weeks before her death, giving a talk on "The Child" to a very responsive audience.

Madge Russell writes: Common Wealth and every cause or movement devoted to the upholding of human rights and dignity has suffered a loss in the death of Chrystal Cates, who was one of those people who have to die before their moral and spiritual worth is fully understood.

"So she passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for her on the other side"

=====

FRIDA EHLERS died in Somerset, on 15th March, following a stroke, the third of recent weeks.

Frida was one of the delegates to the merger conference of Forward March and The 1941 Committee, and was therefore a founder member of Common Wealth.



## OBITUARIES (cont'd.)

Frida Ehlers (cont'd).

Thereafter she was active in all Common Wealth affairs, in Bristol until she and her husband Bob moved to first Winterbourne, then Spaxton, and for thirty-five years as a member of the National Committee, which she chaired for twenty years, retiring only six months ago.

Frida's loyalty to Common Wealth and all it stands for, and her stamina and optimism in the face of political adversity and indifference, have been a constant source of inspiration to all who worked with her.

Many years ago she became disabled by an earlier stroke, but her disability seemed to make little outward difference to the pursuit of an active life, which lately has included arduous study for a degree of the Open University. Her attendance at a meeting in the month before her death, in spite of the deterioration in her health this winter typified the indomitable courage for which she will long be remembered.

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### Common Wealth's assertion of fundamental beliefs:

That all who are affected by a decision should share in making it.

That all political action should have a moral basis.

That the fullest potential of individual personality can be realised only in an atmosphere of freedom.

That the creation of a community of mankind should replace the exploitation of man by man.

(The above statement was originally drafted by Frida Ehlers many years ago, and has remained our basis statement of principles ever since).

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